

SUNDAY SCHOOL BANNER

for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

Vol. 36

NOVEMBER, 1902

No. 11

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Torchbearers.

'How fares it, Torchbearer ?'
 "Nay, do not stay me;
 Swift by my course as the flight of an
 arrow !
 Eager, exultant, I spring o'er the stubble,
 Thread through the brier, and leap o'er
 the hollows;
 Firm nerve, tense muscle, heart beating;
 Onward !
 How should I pause e'en to fling thee an
 answer ?"
 "How fares it, Torchbearer ?"
 "Nay, do not stay me;
 Parched is my mouth and my throat may
 scarce murmur;

Eyes are half blinded with sunshines' hot
 glitter;
 Brands from the torch, half-consumed,
 drop upon me,
 Quenching their fire in my blood-heated
 boiling,
 Scarcely less hot than the fierce-falling
 embers.
 Breath would scarce serve me to answer
 thy question."

"How fares it, Torchbearer ?"
 "Reeling, I falter.
 Stumbling o'er hillocks that once I
 leaped over;
 Flung by a tangle that once I had
 broken;
 Careless, unheeding, the torch half ex-
 tinguished;
 Fierce, darting pains through the hand
 that upholds it;
 Careless of all, if at last I may yield it
 into the hands of another good runner."

"How fares it, Torchbearer ?"
 "Well, now I fling me
 Flat on the turf by the side of the high-
 way,
 So in one word be thy questionings an-
 swered.
 Praise for my striving ? Peace ! I am
 weary.
 Thou art unwinded; stand, then, and,
 shading
 Eyes with the hand, peer forward, and
 tell me
 How fares the torch in the hands of yon
 runner ?
 Naught do I reckon of my strength gladly
 yielded,
 So it be only the torch goeth onward."
 —Arthur Chamberlain.